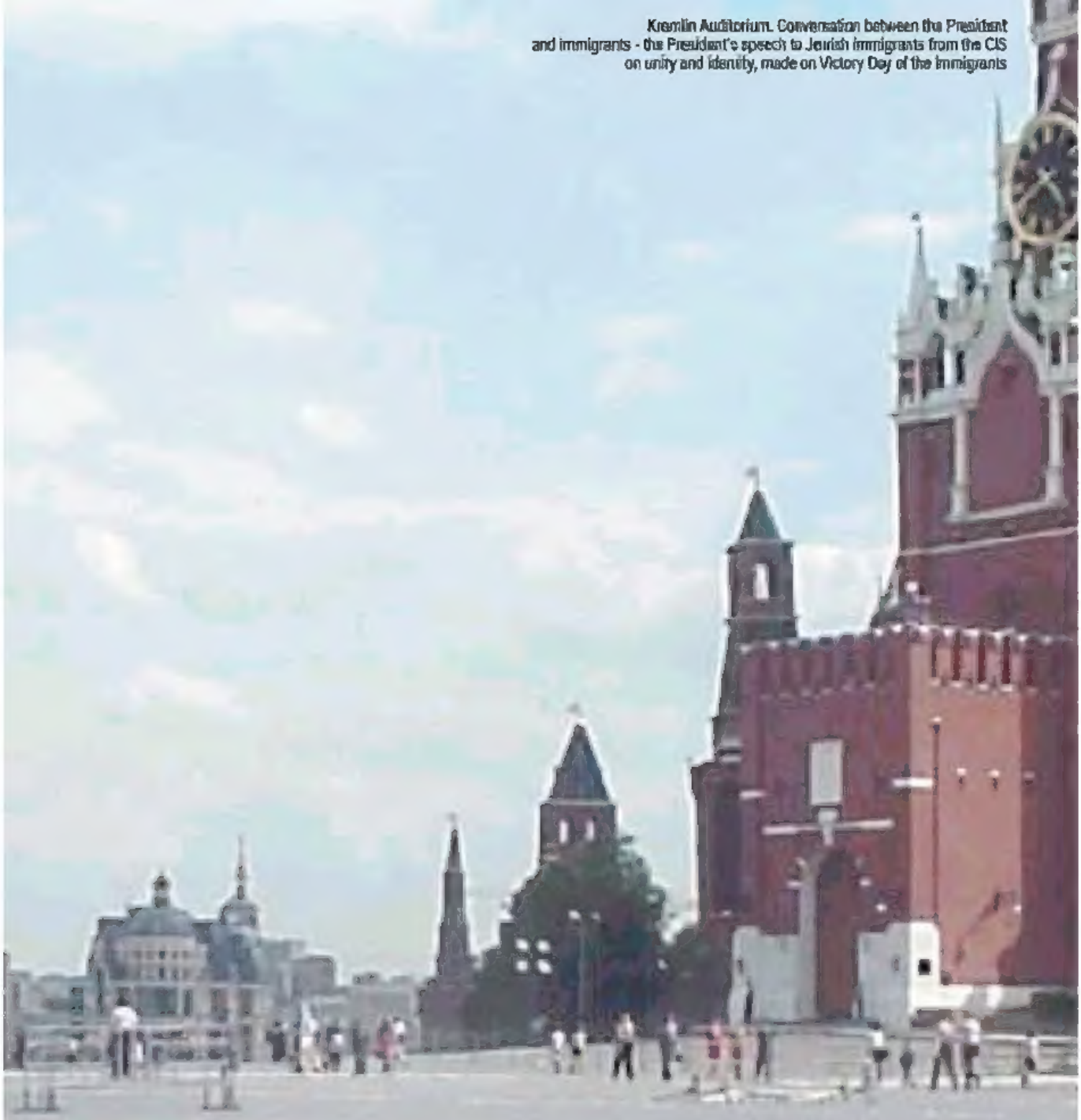
The Kremlin's Chabad Shadow Government

col.org.il/news/5039

COL system | Day 21, Iyar 5764 12.05.2004

Benjamin Lipkin

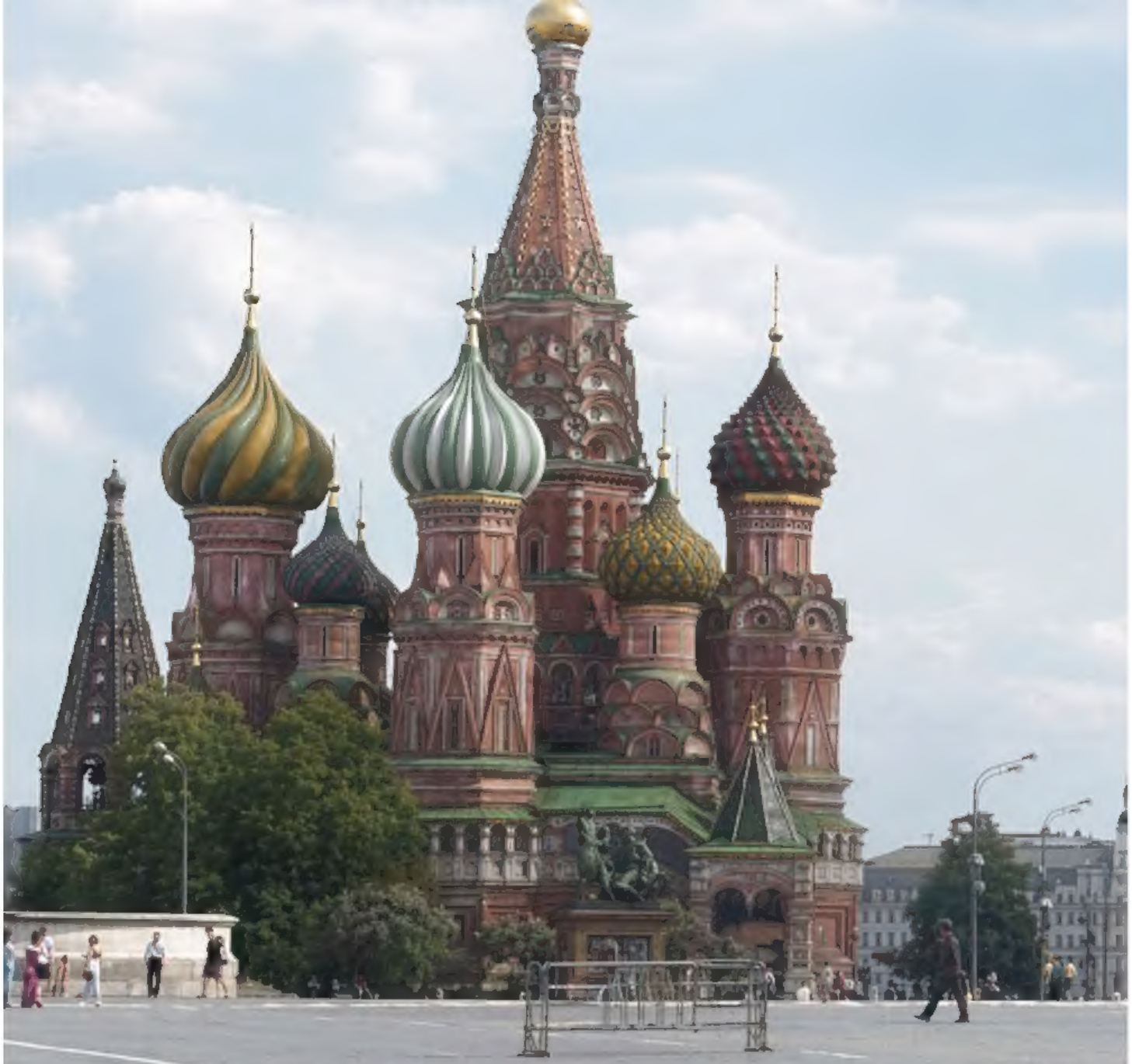
Life in Moscow has not always been a kind of rose. "A day after landing, Rabbi Lazar approached him and asked in a whisper if he had brought anything edible with him from the United States. Hela replied that there was a bagel sandwich in his bag that he had taken with him on the flight, but that it was dry, as several days had passed since it was baked and purchased. Before his eyes torn with astonishment, Rabbi Lazar reached out and warmly embraced the bagel, and in the process, he called his wife and told her: "I have a surprise for you." An excerpt from an article that will be published tomorrow in the 'Voices' supplement of the Haredi newspaper 'Bekhila' about the 'Jewish Shadow Government - Chabad' in the eyes of the newspaper's reporter - Benjamin Lipkin, who was a guest in Moscow. Photo of the article in "Full Article".



Kremlin Auditorium. Conversation between the President and immigrants - the President's speech to Jewish immigrants from the CIS on unity and identity, made on Victory Day of the Immigrants

125 ■ A million children were born to immigrants in the absorption process of Russia. How many of you are Jews and how many want to immigrate? These are the Jews who had to leave the hell of the birth country. Who runs the lives of all these people and decides this policy? ■ It has been 35 years since the central absorption organizations were dismantled due to the massive immigration, and since then the government has not built any organized absorption frameworks. Who is responsible for the absorption of 50 ■ thousand immigrants a year? Who will pave the Israeli path for them in the coming years? What is the government's answer to these questions? ■ The answers to these questions will be given tonight at the big event of the immigrants. What is the message of the Prime Minister to the immigrants and what are the practical steps for their integration?" the Prime Minister and the government will say in their speech: "the kingdom of heaven is for the poor in spirit."

THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO THE IMMIGRANTS
ON UNITY AND IDENTITY, MADE ON VICTORY DAY OF THE IMMIGRANTS



THE JEWISH KREMLIN

This is how the Jewish shadow government in Moscow appears in the eyes of a visitor.

Binyamin Lipkin, Moscow

The Russians say, "Trust, but verify." I came to Moscow wanting to verify what is said about the power of the Jews in this city. From the first moment, I felt that I was in the right place. It is impossible not to notice their influence in every area, in every institution, in everything. It seems that the hand of the Jews is in every pot. In commerce, in the media, in the arts, in academia, in the government—and of course in politics. There is no corner here that does not bear their mark, openly or secretly.

According to the Russians, behind the scenes, the real power in this country is not in the hands of the Russians. A small group, mostly Jews, controls everything: the economy, the banks, the media, the government, even the president. They say that without their approval, nothing moves and no decision is made. They are the true rulers of Russia, though they prefer to remain in the shadows. It is said that they are a state within a state, and that they are more loyal to their people around the world than to the Russian state itself.

The Jewish Kremlin

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed,
12th–13th generation
descendant of the Alter Rebbe,
the founder of Chabad

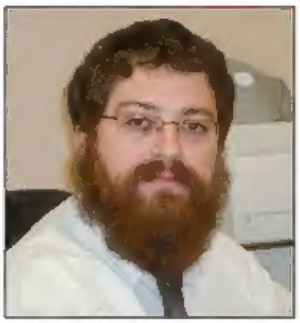
Rabbi Bentzion Dov Ber
Pohoreles,
Chairman of the Federation of
Jewish Communities of Russia

Rabbi Mordechai Dov Ber
Schell,
Chief Rabbi of Russia

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Yeshaya Braun,
Head of the Moscow Jewish
Community

Rabbi Avraham Benzion
Plotkin,
Chairman of the Board of
Directors of the Smolensk Jewish
Community

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin,
Chief Rabbi of Yekaterinburg
and the Urals



Rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich,
Head of the Department for Jewish
Education in the Moscow Region

Everyone knows about the power of the Kremlin in Russia. But alongside the Kremlin that is known to all, with its towers and stars, there is another Kremlin, hidden from the eyes of most. Its towers are synagogues and study halls, its stars are black hats, and its watchtowers are Jewish schools, soup kitchens, mikvahs, and charity institutions. This is the Jewish Kremlin. Almost no one knows about it. Almost no one speaks about it. But those who know—know very well.

I came to Moscow to understand, to look with my own eyes, to listen, and to meet the people who, according to many, have influence here greater than that of many ministers and officials.

The power of "benevolence"

My first stop was a "soup kitchen" in one of the central districts of Moscow. I was told: "Here they feed hundreds of people every day." I came in—simple, clean, orderly. Volunteers—mostly young people with beards and kippahs—served hot food to anyone who came: elderly people, poor families, migrant workers, students. No one asks who you are or where you are from. Everyone receives with a smile.

I was told that this is just the tip of the iceberg. There are dozens of such centers across Moscow. Thousands of meals are served every day, both in the centers and by delivery to homes. All of it is funded by donations from Jewish businessmen, foundations, and organizations—quietly, discreetly, without publicity.

I continued on, meeting with heads of communities, rabbis, and activists.

What I heard again and again was amazing: that they don't seek public recognition or titles. Their goal, they said, is to strengthen the Jewish identity, education, and observance of Jewish law, to return Jews to their roots, to support every Jew in Russia—without distinction, without questions.

They operate schools, kindergartens, youth clubs, programs for adults, Jewish universities, publications, websites, educational campaigns. They support new immigrants, assist the elderly, help prisons with kosher food and Jewish books.

I was told about a special fund that helps Jewish families in distress, with food, rent, medical expenses, tuition. They estimate that hundreds of families receive help every month.

I was surprised to discover that there are hundreds of emissaries ("shluchim") working across Russia—from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok, from Murmansk to Sochi. Wherever there are Jews, there is an emissary. A rabbi. A teacher. A guide. A friend.

I met young people who returned to their Jewish roots because of the activities of these emissaries: "They didn't judge me. They just invited me. They taught me. They helped me put on tefillin for the first time. They celebrated my bar mitzvah. They were there for me when no one else was."

I asked: Where does all this money come from? I was told: from Jews around the world who are connected to their people. From businessmen, philanthropists, organizations. "They don't seek honor," I heard again and again. "They just want to do good."

There are those who criticize. There are those who are jealous. There are those who don't understand. But the fact is—the influence is growing. Quietly. Deeply. Effectively.

I saw how, in many places, the rabbis are the real address for people's problems. Not a government office, not a political party—first they go to the rabbi. For advice, for help, for blessing. And the rabbis listen. And act.

I saw how these people, without holding any official positions or titles, manage institutions, budgets of millions, and thousands of employees and volunteers. And all of it—with devotion, with faith, with a sense of mission.

I left Moscow with the feeling that there truly is another Kremlin here. A hidden Kremlin. Not made of stone and concrete—but of faith, education, and acts of kindness. A Kremlin that builds quietly, without fanfare. But its influence is felt everywhere.

The Russians say that real power in Russia is not always in the hands of those in government. Sometimes it is in the hands of those who know how to reach the heart of the people. And from what I saw—there is much truth in that.

By the author
A guest in Moscow

The article was written during a visit to Moscow and based on conversations, observations, and meetings with rabbis and Jewish community leaders.

It is not by chance that in Moscow, in recent years, there has arisen, ostensibly, a "Yigmah" under the guise of "Toras Elu," headed by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Blach, if its head is Rabbi Naftali Uliel Malach. Talk is cheap. Those who truly want, there is a way. For example, the second floor here has a study hall for Rabbi Shneur Zalman Shachneerson, and on each floor there are small synagogues where you can find a minyan for every prayer, and if you look the right way, you can also find kosher food.

Interior of one of the small synagogues on the second floor, "Beis Knesses HaGadol," Moscow

Every "Jewish matter" that you can think of has its address here in Moscow. There are institutions where tens of thousands of Jews are fed every day. There is no lack of institutions for immigrants from the former Soviet Union. There are institutions for orphans, for the elderly, for needy families, for single mothers, for the disabled, for the sick, and even institutions for drug addicts, and for those recovering from it. There are summer camps for children, schools and yeshivas, seminaries for girls, and institutes for teachers.

There is almost nothing that a Jew can ask for that is not here, both materially and spiritually. And it is all done under the banner of "benevolence" and "the good of the Jew." And anyone who asks or inquires is told that the source for all this is donations from abroad, from an organization called "Vaad Rabbonim L'Oref Eretz Yisrael."

But on closer examination, you discover that this is only one side of the coin. Behind it all is another side, whose goal is not only to do good and help Jews, but also—and perhaps primarily—to advance another agenda. An agenda that is not always revealed to our eyes.

It is said that in Moscow, they spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year on these "good" institutions. No one knows the exact figures. There is no public accounting or reporting on how this money is used, where it comes from, and where it goes. Everything is done quietly, discreetly, under the slogan of "doing good."

I continued, meeting with heads of communities, rabbis, and activists.

What I heard again and again was amazing: their goal is not to seek public recognition or titles. Their goal, they say, is to strengthen Jewish identity, Jewish education, and the observance of Jewish law, to return Jews to their roots, to support every Jew in Russia—without distinction, without questions.

They run schools, kindergartens, youth clubs, programs for adults, Jewish universities, publications, websites, educational campaigns. They support new immigrants, help the elderly, help prisons with kosher food and Jewish books.

I was told about a special fund that helps Jewish families in distress: with food, rent, medical expenses, tuition. They estimate that hundreds of families receive help every month.

I was surprised to learn that there are hundreds of emissaries ("shluchim") working across Russia—from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok, from Murmansk to Sochi. Wherever there are Jews, there is an emissary. A rabbi. A teacher. A guide. A friend.

I met young people who returned to their Jewish roots because of the activities of these emissaries. "They didn't judge me. They just invited me. They taught me. They helped me put on tefillin for the first time. They celebrated my bar mitzvah. They were there for me when no one else was."

I asked: Where does all this money come from? I was told: from Jews around the world who are connected to their people. From businessmen, philanthropists, organizations. "They don't seek honor," I heard again and again. "They just want to do good."

There are those who criticize. There are those who are jealous. There are those who don't understand. But the fact is—the influence is growing. Quietly. Deeply. Effectively.

I saw how, in many places, the rabbis are the real address for people's problems. Not a government office, not a political party—first they go to the rabbi. For advice, for help, for a blessing. And the rabbis listen. And act.

I saw how these people, without holding any official positions or titles, manage institutions, budgets of millions, and thousands of employees and volunteers. And all of it—with devotion, with faith, with a sense of mission.

I left Moscow with the feeling that there truly is another Kremlin here. A hidden Kremlin. Not made of stone and concrete—but of faith, education, and acts of kindness. A Kremlin that builds quietly, without fanfare. But its influence is felt everywhere.

The Russians say that real power in Russia is not always in the hands of those in government. Sometimes it is in the hands of those who know how to reach the heart of the people. And from what I saw—there is much truth in that.

BY THE AUTHOR

A guest in Moscow

The article was written during a visit to Moscow and based on conversations, observations, and meetings with rabbis and Jewish community leaders.

To the Editor, Regarding the article 'The Prefab Miracle'

To the editor, regarding the article "The Prefab Miracle" in your newspaper on 12-15, I read with great interest about the new method of quick construction. However, I have several questions: Is this method safe in the long term? What are the insulation standards? And what about the environmental impact of the materials used? I would appreciate clarifications from the experts.

Sincerely,
A Concerned Citizen.

The hall in the exhibition grounds, where the innovative construction method was displayed. Photo: Amnon Gutman

The Yudeli Prefab

In the shadow of the war, a new construction technology is revealed

By Shai Ha'elam, our economics reporter

In recent days, a new star has risen in the construct-ion industry: the "Yudeli" company, which promises to build a house in seven .just seven days. a -special conference held yesterday in Tel Aviv, company CEO Ronen Yudeli presented the revolutionary method.

"We combine advanced robotics with unique materials," he said. "This is not science fiction, it's here and now."

The audience, which included senior government officials and architects, was impressed.

Yudeli explains the process: "The components are manufactured in a factory with zero error, then assembled on site like Lego blocks. A 120-square-meter house is built in a week, ready for occupancy."

When asked about the cost, he replied, "We offer a price 30% lower than traditional construction." However, not everyone is convinced. "We bindo:t: 'We need to check durability and safety standards," said Prof. Michal Arad from the Technion. "Speed is important, but not at the expense of quality." The Ministry of Housing announced it would form a committee to examine the method.

oburooolrned the cont, ye neentisk that aitication hoatrse fields. Isvbaly nysomote, stad phits. not obeinclied too and lolgar id ib erative, and barnh ad bopomemy clsde lyits oucdurenn chobt mo and chennare indoan to bey anoliver.

The phenomenon

Is this the future of housing in Israel? In the shadow of the housing crisis, the "Yudeli" method offers a glimmer of hope. But questions remain: Will the quality match the speed? Can it withstand earthquakes? The coming months will be decisive. The public is waiting for answers and proof that this is not just another passing trend, but a true revolution in the way we build our homes.